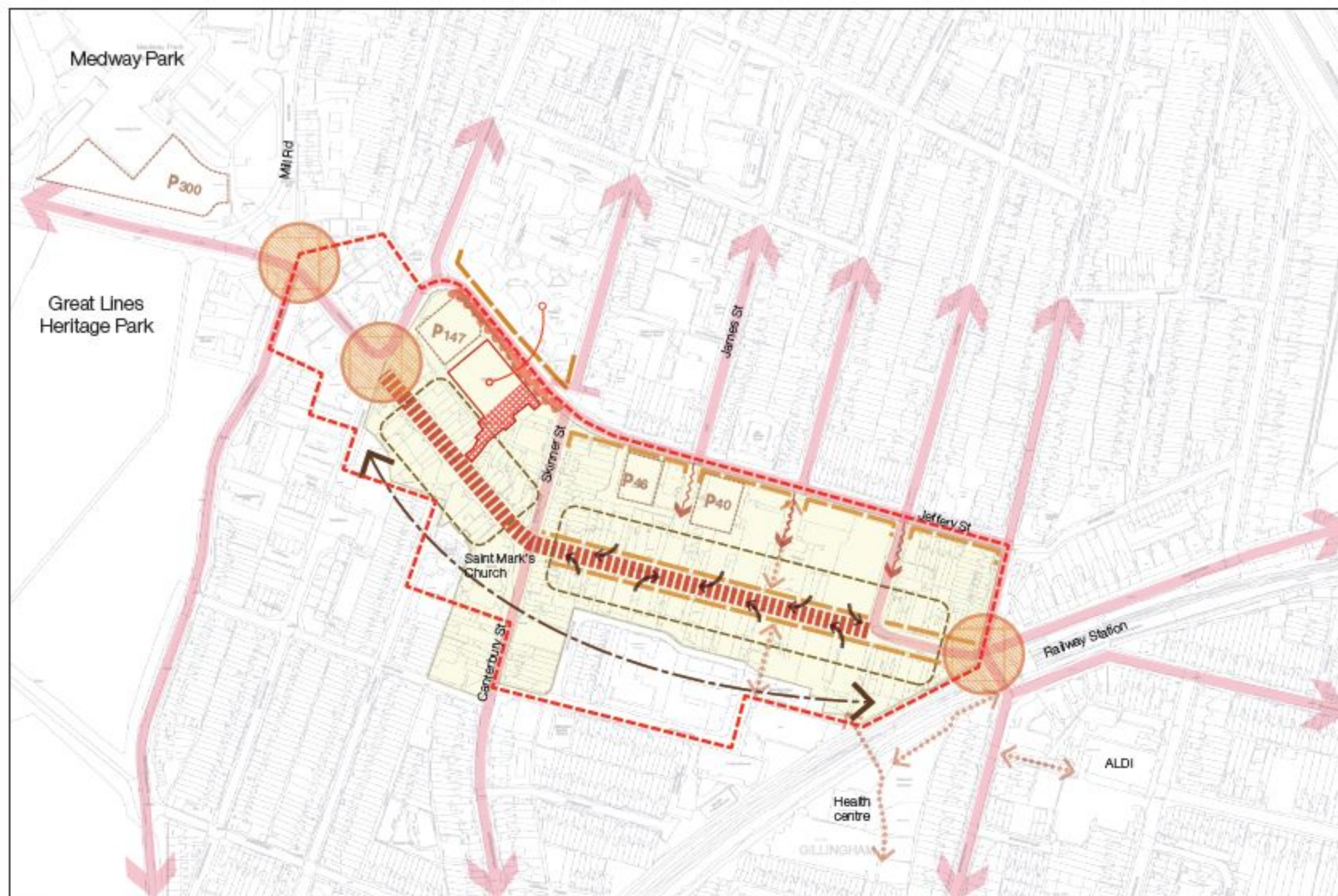


Site Analysis - Constraints

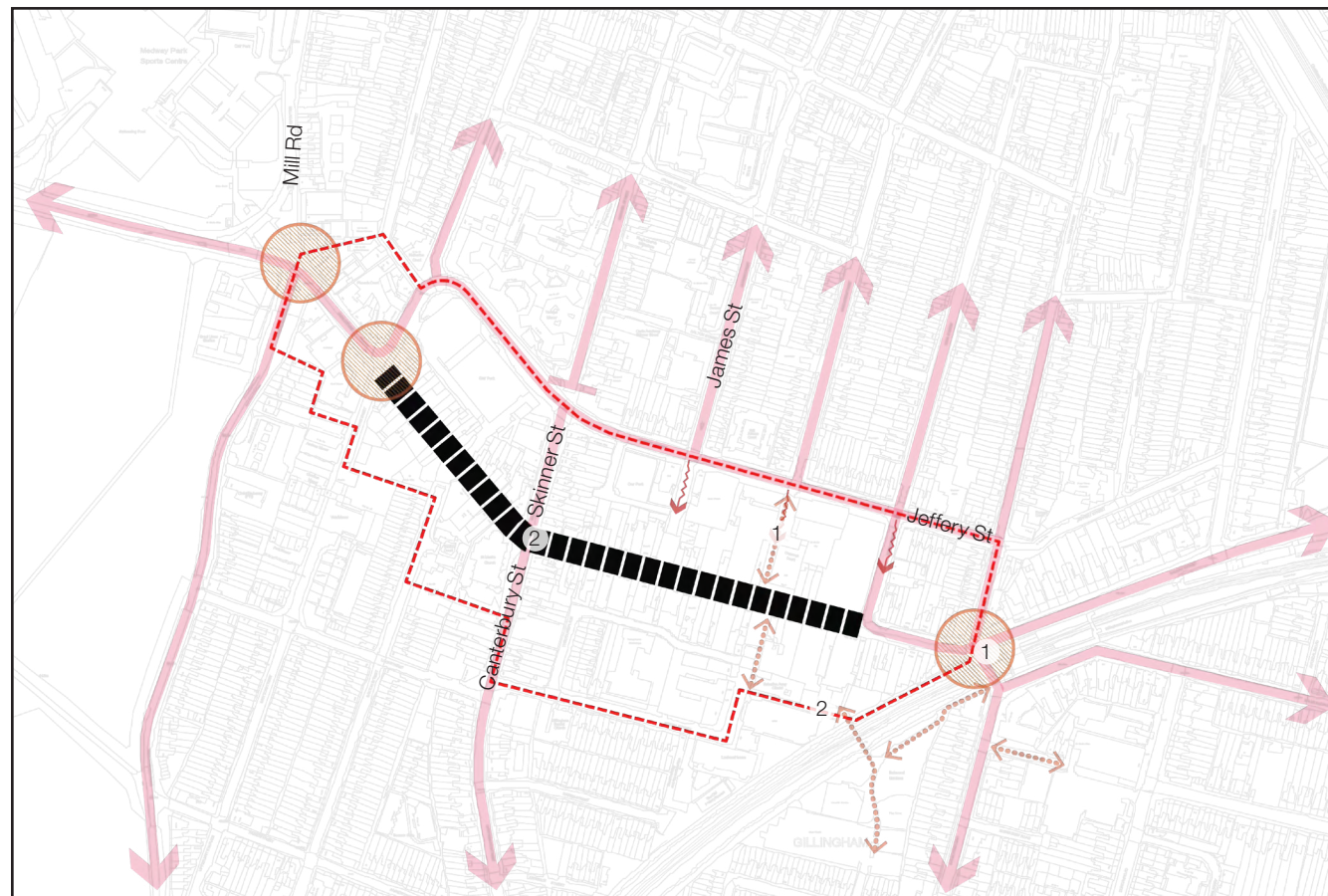


Key:



Gillingham town centre has several disadvantages that need to be addressed.

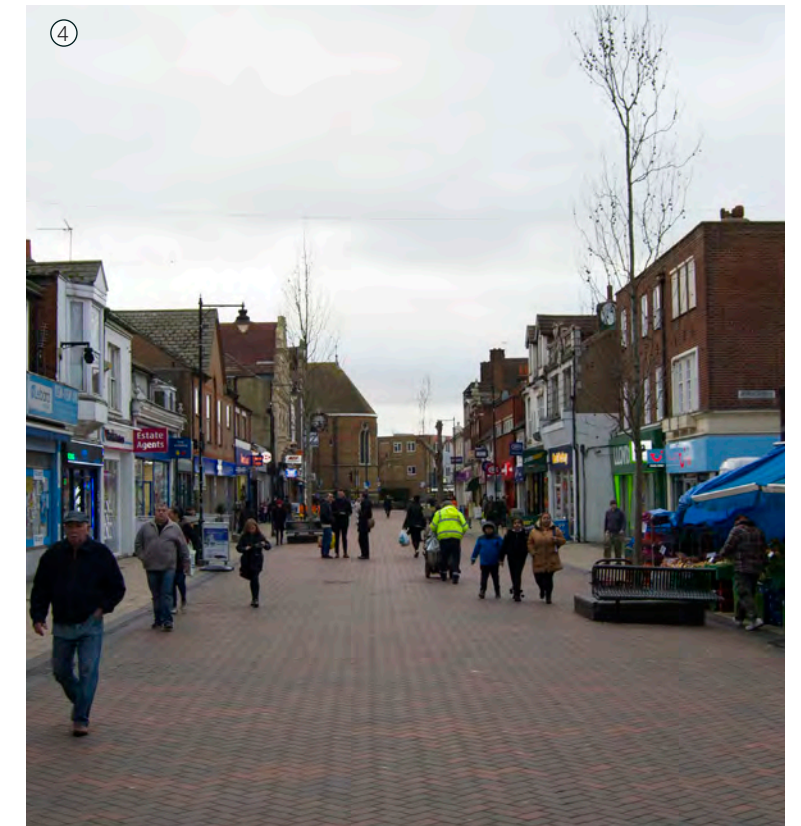
- Whilst accessibility to the town centre is good, visual and physical links between the High Street and the surrounding streets is poor. Connections to the south of the town centre can be indirect because of the railway.
- The High Street is generally in a tired, poor condition, particularly the public realm and some of the shop façades, it can undermine any sense of security or safety.
- The existing parking areas are large, well used and located close to the High Street. However, these sites are also opportunities where development could take place. There is a tension between possible development opportunities and the need for parking.
- The length of the pedestrianised part of the High Street – between the station and Medway Park – is physically long and perceptually long. Shops and services are thinly spread, and there is no circuit.
- Britton Farm is in a poor condition, retaining parking underground and some retail functions (café, market) within the covered area between the High Street and Jeffery Street. However, it is significantly underused and has poor, unattractive links to the High Street despite being directly connected.
- There are a number of poor frontages along the High Street, most prominently at Iceland and Wilko at the eastern end. However, shopfronts are generally poor and upper floors can be neglected. This does not make for an attractive town centre environment for residents and visitors alike.
- The main traffic junctions at both ends of the High Street are traffic dominated and intimidating for pedestrians and cyclists. This is a particular issue at the railway station.



Key:

- Site boundary
- Vehicular links
- Significant pedestrian links
- High Street
- Poor visual links between Jeffery St and the High Street
- Traffic dominated junctions

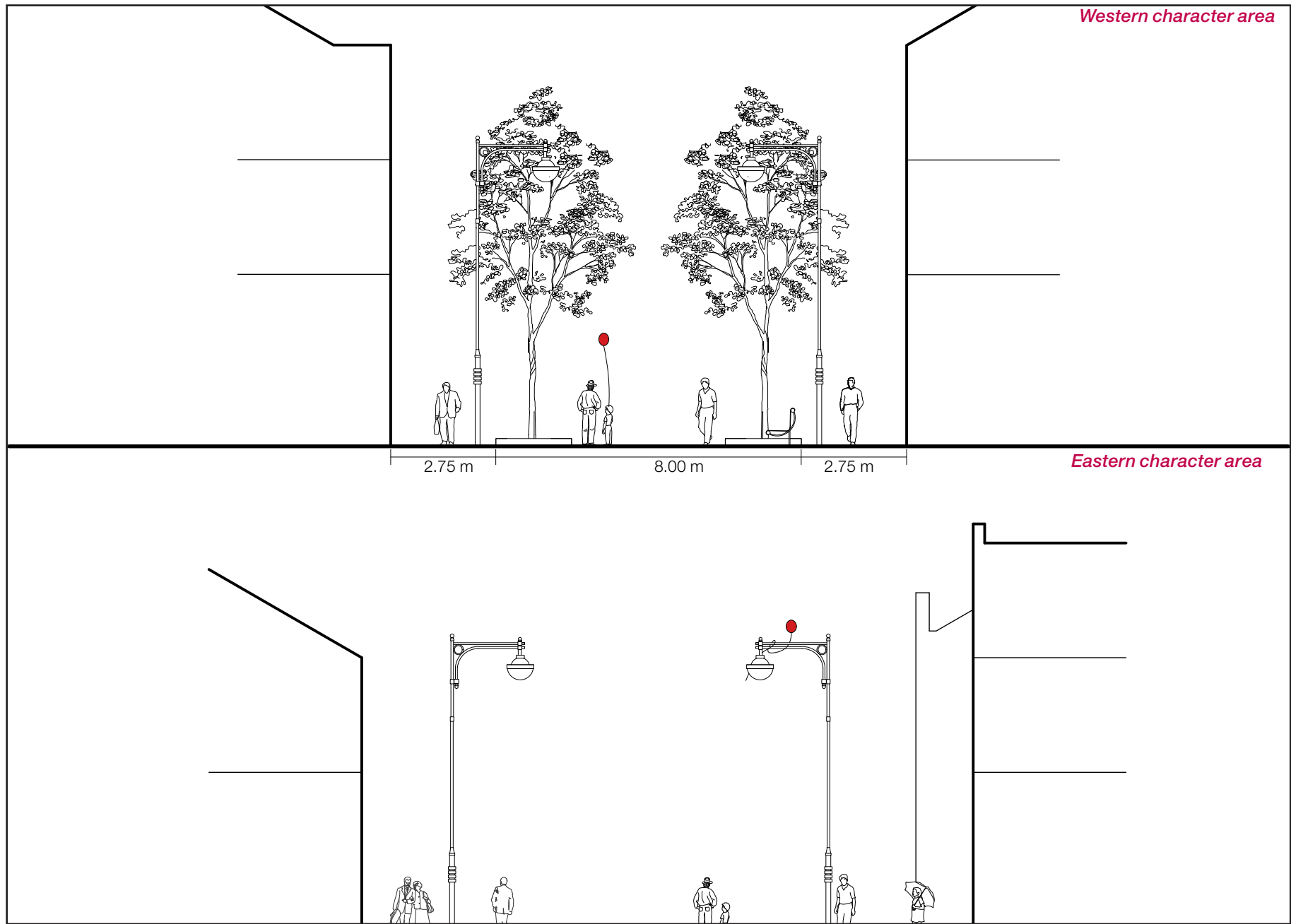
- Gillingham town centre is accessible because streets connect to the High Street - particularly from the northern residential areas - and because of the proximity of the rail station and bus routes. However, the pedestrian links and the quality of the public realm often undermine the effectiveness of pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Despite the potential for good accessibility from surrounding streets and public transport, the final links into the High Street are poor (e.g. Sappers Way, 1), and the southern side of Jeffery Street presents a poor and unattractive front which may compromise the High Street.
- Some potentially significant links - particularly those to the Aldi on Duncan Street via Connaught Road, and links from Balmoral Gardens across the footbridge to Green Street, and the station, are underplayed making them feel indirect and unappealing (2).
- The 'gateway' junctions to the town centre seem to prioritise traffic movement, and do not welcome those on foot into the town centre. At the western side, the priorities are unclear and traffic dominates; at the eastern end the railway station has a complicated road layout to the front alongside numerous different land uses which could be improved as the entrance to the High Street (3).
- The length of the High Street is problematic, as the distance between the station and Britton Street / Medway Park feels too long. The lack of footfall and variety and the poor quality overall contributes to this perception of distance (4). Additionally, there is no opportunity currently for circulation or variety in routes – the shopping centre is a linear street and little else.



left to right: Sappers Walk; the footpath between Balmoral Gardens and Green Street; ; the road junction at the station; the pedestrianised area in High Street (East)

Movement

A



2

- Whilst the western and eastern areas of the High Street have a set of common features, their character is different.
- While both of them have similar dimensions and host similar activities, the eastern side of the High Street is perceived as out of scale due to its width, buildings' height and the lack of street furniture. The small number of residential units along this section contributes, as well, to the general feeling of emptiness.
- The western side of the core retail area is characterised by a different ratio between the built environment height and public realm width and hosts different activities and a larger number of street furniture elements. As a result, the area offers a sense of place and a "warmer" feeling to both visitors or users.
- The sections here are based upon the different parts of the High Street and seek to demonstrate this point.

B

B'

Gillingham Town Centre Cross sections of the High Street